



DATE: July 2, 2020
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Ryan Mahoney, Town Manager
RE: Weekly Update
CC: Department Heads

Happy (almost) 4th of July! As I am writing this, I cannot help but reflect on the last two years and the challenges that we have endured as a community. I am amazed at the generosity and resilience of our residents when the going gets tough. Two years ago, July 3, 2018, the Lake Christine Fire erupted and nearly destroyed the Town. That may be a slight overreach but watching that fire bear down on the town on July 4th was certainly a spectacle that I will not forget soon. The challenges seem to keep coming with the subsequent flooding, discovery, and resolution of the TABOR tax issue, and now COVID-19. I could not have imagined these challenges when I moved my family to Basalt just over three years ago. The experience has certainly pushed me to be more resilient and to appreciate the support of an amazing staff, Town Council and community. We certainly have more challenges ahead but I know that Basalt will endure and be better than ever on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Town staff has been tracking changes in the state and counties public health orders. The Governor introduced the [Protect our Neighbor](#) framework. One significant change in the state's approach is to emphasize more local control regarding what can be open. The Protect our Neighbor Framework states, "Communities that can demonstrate strong public health and health care systems – paired with low virus levels – can and should take on more control over their own reopening plans. This means that different parts of the state will be at different phases of reopening, based on local conditions and capabilities."

One significant change that occurred this week at the state level was the Governor's closing of bars. This was an attempt to slow a recent surge in cases that has been attributed to these businesses.

Eagle County is actively working on an amendment to their public health order which should be ready today. The main change in that order includes a requirement to wear face coverings while indoors. This differs from Basalt's requirement in that we also require face covering outdoors when social distancing cannot be maintained. This is a positive step and creates greater uniformity throughout the region. Avon Town Council was the second municipality in Eagle County to pass a face covering requirement, which they did earlier this week. Now that Eagle County has put this requirement in place, all unincorporated areas and towns in Eagle County will need to comply with the requirement.

Eagle County is launching an outreach campaign to visitors, in advance of the holiday weekend, to educate and improve compliance. This will include messaging on the five commitments to containment and face covering requirement. Targeted businesses include the airport, lodging and retail areas. They have also deployed the variable message boards, like what we have done in Basalt.

The Buskers were out last night for Wednesday Night Live. It seemed like a quieter night than last week but that might be due to the upcoming holiday weekend. It was fun to stroll arounds and listen to the different musicians. Planning included an update on the Buskers as well, providing some detail on the Willits experience.



Police

Officer Matt Lilly received the January - June "Standing 6 Award" for the Police Department. The Standing 6 Award is given twice a year to staff members who go above and beyond their normal duties for the previous six months. Award winners are nominated by other Department staff members. Since January, Officer Lilly excelled in community outreach, proactive enforcement and investigations. Congratulations Officer Lilly!

The Town and Police Department continue to receive complaints about some restaurants not abiding by current public health orders. On Wednesday, Chief Greg Knott and Town Manager Ryan Mahoney met with Eagle County Environmental Health Inspector Marc Benchimol. We discussed the compliance and enforcement challenges we are experiencing. We requested Eagle County Public Health increase their in-person visits to restaurants to provide education, raise awareness and assist in enforcement.

Chief Knott met with the Pitkin County Sheriff and area Police Chiefs to discuss our current police officer training programs. With the passage of Senate Bill 20B-217, law enforcement officers are required to receive training on specific use of force items and tactics. Our four-agency combined training program has always provided this training to our officers and minimal program changes will need to be made.

We held an all-department staff Zoom meeting to discuss the recently adopted "Law Enforcement Integrity" Act (Senate Bill 20B-217) that was signed by Governor Polis. All officers received mandated training. Staff also received legal updates regarding other requirements of the Act. The Act also required several departmental policy changes that have been made. I am pleased to report the police department is in complete compliance with the Act.

Public Works

This week and last week the water department has been fixing and troubleshooting water leaks and outages. There are no more active leaks and some of the outages look like they were caused from hydraulic changes while valves were being isolated which caused private booster pumps to lose their prime. A new concrete drain was installed at well #13 which will carry the overflow water in case the pump was to continue running and unable shut off remotely. The new drain will prevent water or animals from getting back into the system by sending the water away from the building and eliminating any pooling or ponding that had been occurring at the drain outlet.

The streets crew has been mowing and weed eating the rights of way. They plan to have the East and West Basalt fire hydrant curbs painted this week. Next week they will continue to work on the safety-yellow and blue-handicap curbs.

We have started our concrete repair projects which include a large section of Kestrel Court where a tree root had caused the surface to buckle and crack into pieces. There is a large panel in the roadway on Elk Circle that had settled and was dug up and replaced. A few other spots that are being worked on include the curb and gutter section on Two Rivers Road near the Gold Rivers Court buildings along with two panels near the bridge towards 7-11. A section of the concrete walkway at the skate park that connects two of the features was removed due damage from some very large tree roots. We are going to look at putting down another material down like wood chips or a gravel so we don't need to remove the tree at this time.

The facilities department finished getting one of our affordable housing units ready for a new tenant by installing new blinds, painting, and repairing sections of drywall in a bathroom. They are still dealing with an enormous amount of trash and trying to clean tables and chairs since they all have more food and debris stuck on them with the extra use. Anytime a park playground has no one using it they spray them down with disinfectant from a pump sprayer.

Parks has been working to improve the irrigation and pressure at the cemetery by removing an obsolete main-line irrigation valve that was found after troubleshooting the low pressure. That should increase the overall flow of water available up there and provide a better supply as we start to upgrade that system.

Planning

Willits Town Center – Work continues on a foundation permit for Steadman Clinic on Block 4 of Willits Town Center. No formal permits have been issued at this time. Staff continues to work on parking issues associated with construction and the parking that was taken away to allow restaurants more outdoor space. Additionally, Staff worked on the building permit for TACAW.

Other Development Review/Applications – Staff spent considerable time on interpretations, dealing with complaints, construction related issues and development inquiries. Staff has also worked on setting up meetings with the Basalt Business Center West Homeowner's Association and some of the auto-related business owners to discuss the parking on the carwash proposal in Southside. Additionally, Town Staff has been working on some code enforcement items.

POST – At their 7/1 meeting, POST reviewed a proposal from Diana Elliot to modify South Park in Stott's Mill to allow four tennis courts. POST gave a favorable nod to including four courts but also wanted to include a full multi-purpose basketball court as originally included. Diana Elliot intends to submit for a USTA grant to cover the cost of adding to the tennis courts. POST also re-ratified their action taken earlier on the Arbaney Pool after more discussion on the changing rooms, hot tub, robot pool and kids' area of the large pool. They noted they could add on service later to address the family-friendly changing rooms depending on more public feedback and POST discussion.

Pitkin County Coordination – Pitkin County held its second meeting on amendments to make amendments to its Growth Management System. The project was launched on Thursday and their input meetings will continue through most of August. This Thursday they primarily focused on outlining the vision for Pitkin County.

Eagle County Coordination - The P&Z approved its comment letter to Eagle County on the amendment to the Willits Bend PUD at its meeting on June 30th. Generally, the P&Z's comments were supportive of the application to construct a 75-unit Arch Diocese affordable housing project.

Other – The first Wednesday Night Live Buskers event, co-sponsored by the Town, Basalt Chamber, and TACAW, was held Wednesday evening. This week the acts in Willits saw more visitors, particularly in Triangle Park which featured a bluegrass duo. Families and children gathered and were seen respecting social distancing. In true busker fashion, none of the Willits acts were mic'd this week. Downtown also saw a good group of participants enjoying the buskers.

Recreation

Garry's kid's camp in Arbaney Park was a success with 44 participants. This week there was no camp scheduled, but camp is back in session on Monday July 6th.

The Basalt Pool has been rocking and rolling! Reservation times have been full, including this weekend. Residents are getting the hang of the reservation process as well as the facility expectations. We are seeing a rise in the number of cancellations though they have been rebooked. We are working on an option for private swim lessons where the instructor would teach both parent and child in order to maintain social distancing. This would best fit phase three of the Eagle County Transition Trail Map.

Tennis and baseball have been pushed back to standby as the Eagle County is still in the phase two on the Transition Trail Map.

Finance

It's been a short week for me in Finance due to getting married last weekend, but there is still lots going on! The State of Colorado has passed legislation to waive and suspend interest due to late property tax collections. The interest that the Town brings in is usually minimal, and the hope is that this legislation will help businesses and individuals who have been impacted financially by COVID-19 closures. The Town has collected 92.73% of Eagle County property tax collections, which is slightly lower than normal, but is better than anticipated in the financial modeling. Therefore, Town cash flow will not be impacted by this one-time legislation.

Basalt Bucks is working well, and businesses are starting to return their Bucks for reimbursement. We are writing checks for these reimbursements to assure adequate internal controls. Additionally, we reimburse businesses within a week of submittal to assure a quick turnaround. We will be providing numbers of Basalt Bucks that have been reimbursed at the July 14 Council meeting.

The audit has been submitted on time to the Government Finance Officers Association for approval of the CAFR excellence award. We will keep you posted regarding the outcome!

The budget process will be starting in July with Department Head conversations regarding expenditures and the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and 2021 revenue projections. The Finance Advisory Board will review the budget calendar, and we will be discussing the budget process with Council during July/August. The first draft of the budget must be submitted to Council by October 15, and there will be a lot of conversation and alignment between now and then. The budget is guided by Council's Strategic Framework that outlines the goals and priorities for the Town for the ensuing budget year. We anticipate a challenging 2021 budget year due to declining revenue from the COVID recession. This revenue decline will require the Town to look at all funding sources (restricted and unrestricted) to

ensure we are able to keep essential services, maintain critical infrastructure, and implement the Town's Strategic Framework.

Ryan and I continue to work with department heads to review 2020 expenses to assure the Town is providing essential services, while managing declining revenue sources. The Town had previously delayed \$1,155,718 in expenses for this year due to the unknown financial impacts related to COVID-19. We have added back around \$600,000 of those costs, leaving us at a reduction of \$571,450. However, the expenditure overages anticipated for 2020 total \$260,197, which leaves a current net savings in expenses for the 2020 General Fund at \$311,253.